



# Shopping on a Budget

## Did You Know?

While one product may be priced lower than another, always look at the cost per portion. The more expensive product could actually have more servings and be the overall better value.

### For example:

**Box A** - \$4.99 with 12 servings (\$0.42/serving)

**Box B** - \$4.59 with 10 servings (\$0.46/serving)

*Box A is the better value even though it costs .40 more.*

## Cost per portion is helpful when buying items like:

- Laundry detergent
- Pretzels or chips
- Juice
- Pasta
- Dried beans
- Crackers
- Dried fruit
- Beverage mixes
- Nuts

Having a limited food budget can be tough. When life gets busy, it is tempting to order take-out for dinner, but buying prepared foods can get expensive very quickly. With a little planning, you can stick to your food budget, master the art of grocery shopping, and cook healthy versions of your favorite take-out foods!

## Look for Sales

Look at the weekly ads for your favorite grocery stores and try to plan some meals around items that are on sale. For dry goods (rice, pasta, beans), canned products, and frozen foods that you use frequently, consider stocking up when they are on sale. Often produce is on sale when in season, which is when it is at its best nutritionally, too.

## Use Coupons/Store Cards

Many stores have reward or member cards that are free, and each time you shop you earn points toward coupons or gas discounts. You can also ask if the store has online coupons, which are loaded right onto your card, saving you even more money at checkout. There are also many coupons in newspapers or online, but use these only for things you need and use or you might end up going over your budget.

## Buy Store Brands

Store brands are sometimes perceived as being lower quality than national brands, but often this is not the case. In most cases, you probably won't even be able to tell the difference. Buying the store brand can usually get you the products you want for much less than name brand products.



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## Making Your Budget Go Further

One of the best ways to maximize your grocery budget is to do more food preparation work yourself. This can include cooking things from scratch instead of using mixes, buying fresh ingredients rather than pre-processed ones, and making your own snacks and beverages.

- Rather than buying coffee drinks each day, make your own at home and bring it in a thermos.
- Cut up fruits and vegetables ahead of time so they are easily accessible during the week when you need a snack.
- Try your hand at making muffins, granola bars and trail mix to carry with you. You can choose the ingredients you like, and it will also be much cheaper than buying ready-made goods!

### Homemade Trail Mix

Makes 8 ½ cup servings

Most of these ingredients can be found in bulk bins at your local grocery store. You can buy only what you need, and change up ingredients to suit your tastes. Delicious, and much less expensive than premade trail mix!

½ cup roasted, unsalted cashews  
½ cup raw or roasted almonds  
1/3 cup dried, unsweetened cranberries  
1 cup whole wheat Chex® cereal  
½ cup dark chocolate chips  
1 cup pretzel sticks  
1/3 cup dried pineapple bits

Mix together, portion into individual bags or containers, and enjoy!

